



## **FACTS ABOUT CHILD SEXUAL ASSAULT**

- By age 18, one of every four girls and one of every six boys has been sexually assaulted.
- Most offenders know or are related to the children they abuse and typically take advantage of their relationships to get the children to go along and to not tell
- Most children are not able to tell parents right away about the abuse; they are often worried about what will happen
- Children react in different ways after sexual abuse – some children have serious emotional reactions and others have only minor reactions
- The love and support of family is the most important factor in children's recovery

### ***What is child sexual assault?***

Child sexual assault is the exploitation or coercion of a child for the sexual gratification of another person. It includes any kind of sexual contact between an adult and a child. Sexual contact by a teenager that is forced or with a younger child is also sexual assault. Sexual assault is a crime.

### ***What should I do if I'm concerned that my child is being sexually assaulted?***

Most children are hesitant to tell about being sexually abused. Physical evidence of abuse is rare. And, unfortunately, there are no specific behaviors that definitely indicate sexual abuse. If you are concerned that your child is being sexually assaulted, the following guidelines may help you to respond to your child:

- Remain calm while talking to your child
- Call CPS or the police to report the abuse
- Call us if you want to talk or to schedule an appointment
- Consult with your pediatrician
- Encourage your child to talk freely
- Ask open ended questions like "tell me what happened" and don't suggest what you think might have happened to your child
- Keep your responses objective – stay away from judgmental comments

### ***Getting help***

Sexual abuse affects the child and the whole family. Help is available. We can offer:

- Crisis intervention: meeting with a counselor to discuss immediate concerns
- Information and referral
- Legal advocacy: information on legal evidence and the legal system
- Medical examinations
- Counseling for children and families

**HARBORVIEW CENTER FOR SEXUAL ASSAULT  
AND TRAUMATIC STRESS  
206-744-1600**